

THE MADONNAS AND THE EVES IN THE CEBUANO NOVELS  
OF BEN ABARQUEZ VILLALUZ

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of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS IN LITERATURE

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by

FELY B LATRAS

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## ABSTRACT

The four Cebuano novels of Ben Abarquez Villaluz which were printed in Ang Bag-ong Lungsoranon (The New Local Citizen), namely Dear Nanay, 1995 (Dear Mother, 78 chapters), Bulak sa Bukid, 1997 (Mountain Flower, 60 chapters), Joanna, Ang Babaye sa Isla Puting Bato, 1998 (Joanna, The Woman of the White Rock Island, 66 chapters), Ang Regency ni Brother Bobby B., 1998 (The Regency of Brother Bobby B , 27 chapters) were studied carefully to make a critical evaluation of the Madonnas and the Eves. These four novels were selected because the women characters have the traits which are reflective of the Virgin Mary (Madonna) and Eve.

Madonna is one of the representations of the Virgin Mary, a woman of character and virtue who is a role model to all women. Eve is the name of the first woman created by God to be the wife of Adam, a woman of weakness who always finds someone or something else responsible for her actions.

The Madonnas and the Eves in the Cebuano novels of Villaluz make a significant impact and influence on the other characters. They also show the opposing roles of women in literature.

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## Chapter 1

### THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

#### INTRODUCTION

##### Rationale of the Study

In one of his popular plays, "Lysistrata" the Greek dramatist Anstophanes (448-385 B.C.) wrote, "It is a wise philosopher who called women the paradoxical sex; you cannot live with them and you cannot live without them." Some men are lucky because they understand a little the nature of women. If the majority of men understand women even in this little way, perhaps there might be less heartaches today

Women have always been an interesting subject. They are being studied in the real world or in fiction. Women writers have brought attention to the plight of women at present by focusing on them in literature. The Filipino woman is such an interesting subject since she has been through a good number of cultural influences as Philippine history dictates. She has undergone four different phases of transformation. First, there was the Pre-Spanish Filipina, who was loved, respected and given consideration. Men gave her dowry for marriage and she ruled her kingdom and fought in wars. Second, was the Spanish Filipina who was deeply religious but ignorant about men. The separation of sexes was deeply emphasized at this time. She was not allowed to date without a chaperon. Third is the American Filipina who

experienced the emancipation of women. Education becomes her passion. But not only that for she became more imitative and more American than Americans. Fourth is the present day Filipina. She is a conglomeration of various traits. By birth she is a Malayan, she is no less adorable because she has acquired new elements to replace old ones. She is still religious without being mystical, she is trained and educated. In other words, today's Filipina believes in modesty and honor but she also claims responsibility for her destiny due to her own making (Mendoza, 1951.10)

Literature reflects history. It has the power to present a group of people of yesteryears to come alive before the eyes of their readers. This becomes possible through the artist's interpretation of our past. As one study puts it: "one way of comprehending a particular group of people is to study them as they are interpreted by the most observant and sensitive of their kind, their writers" (Escasinas, 1966)

Cebuano literature is vividly experienced through one of its reputable writers in the soap opera, Ben Abarquez Villaluz. He is one writer who has shaped Cebuano sensibility for generations. Much of his life was devoted to the dramatic arts. His influence, however, was most widely felt in the radio soap opera. His major works include the phenomenally popular radio serials Mayor Andal (which was made into a movie). He was most prolific in the 1960s and 1970s airing plays like Enteng Makaluluoy, Dear Nanay, Katapusang Awit and many more over such stations as dyHP, dyRF, and



dySS He wrote around 50 plays for stage, radio and television. A religious person, he sought to infuse religious themes into his work.

This study focuses on Cebuano Literature particularly on the women characters in the Cebuano novels of Ben Abarquez Villaluz. These four novels are; Dear Nanay, 1995 (Dear Mother, 78 chapters), Bulak sa Bukid, 1997 (Mountain Flower, 60 chapters), Joanna, Ang Babaye sa Isla Puting Bato, 1998 (Joanna, The Woman of the White Rock Island, 66 chapters), Ang Regency ni Brother Bobby B 1998 (The Regency of Brother Bobby, 27 chapters) have women characters of notable personality. They possess strength, power and influence in their family. Their role in the family is remarkable which would either be good or bad. As wives or lovers, they play a great part in shaping their husband's personality and decision making. As mothers, they can be a mother of perpetual help or the manipulator of their children's life. As a daughter she can be a source of inspiration and strength to her parents however she can also be so misguided just like today's "colegiala" who is still shockable and excitable – an innocent waiting to be led astray.

Madonna and Eve are the names used to show the opposing roles of women in the four Cebuano novels of Villaluz. Madonna reflects the goodness of a woman, she has faith, humility and patience. Eve on the other hand symbolizes a woman's vanity and hollowness. These women characters would also give a glimpse of a Cebuano who is caught in the midst of various cultural and historical influences. Who is she and what is she

made of? Did she remain the Pre-Spanish Filipina, the Spanish Filipina or the American Filipina? Is she a combination of the three? Whether she has become more of the other, it is the image and the character of the woman that makes the difference. Does she reflect Eve in Paradise who was vain and ambitious or did she emerge as the Madonna who became the mother of Christ, the Savior?

There is a need to understand women and what it is to be a woman in the context of the Philippine culture and society. "Women contributed a large share in the support and maintenance of relationships, including services in the family" (Bacatan, 1994). It also noted that, "the hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world" (Escasinas, 1966). This thesis would draw aside once again the curtain of mystery that surrounds the influence of a woman in the family.

### Theoretical Background

As early as 1667 John Milton, an English writer, wrote his masterpiece entitled *Paradise Lost*. This poem made an impressive impact on English Literature. In his poem Milton revealed his perception on women. Eve was the woman who suffered in Milton's time and place. She was the "weaker" sex since she was made not directly in God's image but from a part of Adam's body. Eve worshipped God through Adam and not in her own right. She was beautiful yet her beauty was her downfall when the serpent worked on her vanity. The serpent knew exactly which buttons to push - her vulnerability to